

# COUNTY OF MAUI

## Cultural Resources Commission

### Lahaina Historic District Design Guidelines

#### Sign Guidelines



#### SIGNS WERE CREATIVE, YET SIMPLE

Signs in the Lahaina Historic District are meant to visually identify and direct customers experiencing the district from a slow moving vehicle or as a pedestrian. In their historical use, signs were creative, restrained and abbreviated. The sign builders and painters of the period were artists in their craft. Signs were typically painted on wood or metal, or directly on a building's parapet, windows, or sunshade.

A well designed and located sign can make a good impression, attract potential customers and unify a streetscape. By contrast, a confused, poorly designed or placed sign can overwhelm buildings, detract from the area, given an inappropriate impression, and potentially damage historic materials or finishes.

A **sign** is defined as any name, logo, figure, painting, drawing, message, placard, poster, announcement, demonstration, display, declaration, illustration, symbol or art object used to convey messages or advertisement of products, services, or information, when the same is placed on real property or on the outside of buildings or structures and on the inside of buildings within three feet of a window or door.

#### HISTORIC SIGNAGE IN LAHAINA

Historically, signage in Lahaina during the plantation era included of the following types:

- Painted wood or metal signs, mounted parallel or perpendicular to the face of the building

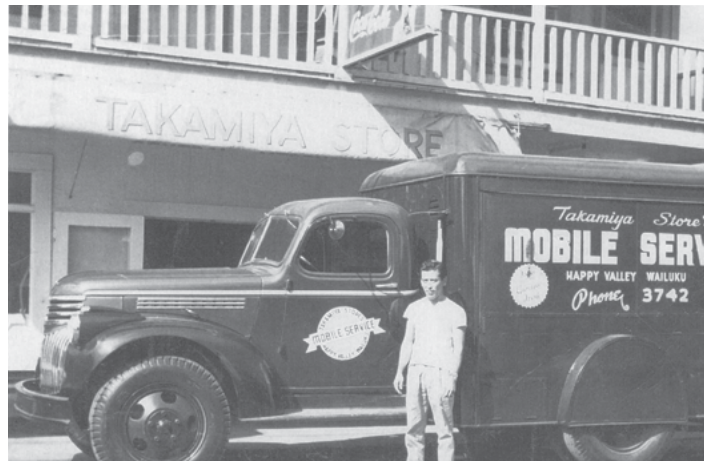


These guidelines are intended to provide historical continuity and flexibility.

- Individual, raised wood or plaster letters, mounted to the face of the building



- Signs painted on sunshades, which were typically suspended from the bottom of a projecting second floor lanai



- Painted signs, applied directly to the face of the building



Chapter 19.52.30, Maui County Code describes sign allowances in the three Maui County historic districts with the following language: "No signs that blink, revolve, or contain lighting from within shall be allowed. Wall signs shall be no larger than twelve square feet. Marquee or hanging signs shall be no larger than eight square feet. All signs shall be rustic in design."

## PRESENT-DAY SIGN TYPES AND USES

**Business Identification Signs** - The majority of sign permits reviewed by the Planning Department are business identification signs. This sign type is limited in size by Chapter 19.52.30, Maui County Code to no more than twenty (20) square feet in area. Business Identification Signs can come in a variety of different forms, but there may not be more than two (2) of these signs per business address, facing a public right-of-way.

- Painted signs, applied directly to first floor windows





**Building Identification Signs** - Historically, some commercial plantation buildings featured Building Identification Signs that communicated the owner's name, the date of establishment, or the address. These signs were located on parapets or the upper portion of a building's wall. A Building Identification Sign may not include the business name, unless it was done historically, or a single tenant occupies the entire building, as seen in the Lahaina Bakery photo. Owners are encouraged to name buildings after their original owners or a notable past tenant, and/or indicate an establishment date.



Businesses are allowed up to twenty (20) square feet total of signage when determined to be appropriate by the Cultural Resources Commission. The square footage of a Building Identification Sign shall be considered part of the 20 square feet total. These signs are allowed in addition to the maximum business square footage so long as the building name and the business name are not the same. The Cultural Resources Commission and their staff are able to assist building owners with matters concerning building histories and Building Identification Signs.

**Directory Signs** - For multi-tenant complexes, directory signs can be either freestanding or attached to a building, depending on how much space there is between the building and the sidewalk. They include information about several businesses on a single sign, with an identifying building address and/or building or complex name. For a unified appearance, the individual nameplates on the sign should match each other in size, material, color, letter size, case, and font style.

**Menu Signs** - Menus may be posted on the exterior of a building as long as the menu boards are constructed of wood and do not exceed three square feet, including frame or case. All menu boards shall be affixed to the building wall. No more than one (1) menu sign shall be permitted per business address. Plastic and aluminum are not allowed.



**Public Signs** - Non-commercial signs, including safety signs, trespassing signs, parking signs, signs indicating scenic or historic points of interest, commemorative plaques and directional signs are considered public signs.



Interpretive signage is an important component of the Lahaina Historic District. Historic site markers, building history plaques and the larger interpretive panels work together to educate the public about Lahaina's history.

Likewise, way-finding signs that direct vehicular and pedestrian traffic to points of interest and key destinations are important components of a thriving historic district. All of these types of signage should be reviewed and a way-finding and interpretive plan should be developed to identify appropriate construction types and themes for each type of sign to present a consistent and orderly system of information to the public.



**Banners** are temporary signs made of a fabric or reinforced material and displayed for a temporary period of time. In the Lahaina Historic District there are very strict criteria regarding banners. Banner requests shall be by or on behalf of a non-profit organization to promote events occurring on Front Street or the parcel of land to which the banner is attached sponsored by the organization. No commercial banners are allowed to be hung out of doors or within three feet of the exterior of the building. Page 14 explains the details of obtaining a banner permit.



While public signs are an important aspect of the Lahaina Historic District, this type of signage can easily become excessive. Exorbitant signage should be avoided, as overloading people with information only serves to make them less interested in the message.



**Murals** are large sized images or graphics that contain no commercial message. Murals are not permitted in the Historic District.





# BUSINESS IDENTIFICATION SIGN TYPES

**Wall Signs** are single sided signs mounted parallel to and fastened to a wall of the building.



**Window Signs** are generally applied to the window or door glazing. Signs that are attached to the glazing are generally painted or vinyl applique'.



**Awning Signs** are typically located on the awning valance. In addition to identifying the business, awnings can protect pedestrians from rain and merchandise from sun damage, as well as reduce solar heat gain. They are a good option for businesses that do not have an architectural awning.



**Hanging Signs** are one or two sided signs, generally suspended from an architectural element of the building, such as a gallery, awning or balcony, mounted perpendicularly to the face of the building.



**Projecting Signs** are generally two sided signs, suspended from a metal or wooden bracket or building element, mounted perpendicular to the face of the building.



**Ground Signs** are not attached to the building. They can include information on one or both sides. They are often located in landscaped planting beds.



# SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT SPECIAL TREATMENT

**Sun Shades** - the *mauka* side of Front Street faces directly into the setting sun. For this reason many businesses choose to install sunshades at the outward edge of the architectural awning or balcony. This has been done from the time of Lahaina's development until present day. In some cases, having the sun shade rolled down over the storefront blocks the wall sign from view. In cases where existing signage is obstructed by the sun shades, businesses are permitted to place a total of 12 square feet of text or logo on the sunshade or shades.



**Roof Signs** - In rare cases, it may be appropriate to utilize a roof sign. Roof signs were used during the time of Lahaina's development. These signs were typically extremely simple in design, generally with only text, in an unadorned font. There are buildings in the district that have been converted from a different use and literally have no other viable option to place a sign parallel to the building wall. It is important that a roof sign be designed appropriately so as not to overwhelm the building. The placement of roof signs shall require the approval of the Cultural Resources Commission.



## PUBLIC SELLING, HAWKING, AND SOLICITING

For any commercial district to maintain its viability it is essential that the district as a whole delivers a consistently pleasant experience to the visitor. When shoppers are visually and audibly accosted while trying to enjoy the Lahaina ambience they are less likely to spend money and certainly less likely to return.

**Maui County Code, Chapter 19.52.090.E Selling in Public Places** - It is unlawful for any person to carry on or solicit business in any location on any street, highway or sidewalk. The same is also unlawful in any location, in any park or open space that is owned or maintained by a government agency having administrative authority over the park or open space.

This clause prevents any person from undertaking a sales transaction or collecting money on

public property. It also prevents individuals from soliciting the business of passersby on the street.

These limitations are in place with the goal of maintaining a quality sensory experience for the guest of the Historic District. Flashing, moveable and audible signs have been prohibited in the historic districts since their inception. Over time, as technology has changed and rents have increased on Front Street many people have tried to stretch the limits of this clause. These design guidelines prohibit ANY audible signage, human or otherwise, from communicating a commercial message to individuals on public property. Sales personnel on private property may communicate a commercial message to other individuals on private property so long as the volume of the conversation is not intended for the public.



# SIGN MATERIAL

Historically, signs were typically made of wood and were attached directly to the building or suspended from metal brackets or awnings. In some cases signs were painted directly on building walls or windows. In other cases individual letters were carved out and placed on the building walls.

All new **hanging, projecting, wall** and **ground signs** must meet the following criteria:

- Signs shall be constructed of wood except for awnings and signs painted on walls. Tongue and groove or solid wood planks are permitted, however plywood and T1-11 are not permitted.
- Sign lettering, logos, symbols, and embellishments shall be painted, carved, raised, incised, sandblasted or crafted.
- Sign backgrounds may be stained or painted with a wash that allows the wood construction to be discernible.
- Synthetic materials, metals, glass, plastic and vinyl are not permitted.
- Chain, rope, wood or metal brackets shall be used as supports for signs to the building wall and architectural elements such as building canopy and parapet.

Note: There is an exception to the above requirements regarding wall signs. If deemed appropriate by the Planning Department or Cultural Resources Commission, wall signs may be painted directly on the building, provided that a permit is obtained prior to commencing work.

## MIXING SIGN TYPES TO MATCH BUILDING ARCHITECTURE

It is generally important to have one sign that is parallel with the building wall, which is commonly viewed from either a travel lane or the sidewalk on the other side of the street. The second sign should be geared for the pedestrian on the sidewalk in front of the business. To notify a pedestrian of the business, hanging signs or window signs at eye level work nicely.

Because each building's architecture and historic context are different, each building's sign placement and type may be different. Therefore, these design guidelines allow the tenant to work with the Department of Planning, and in some cases, the Cultural Resources Commission, to determine the best combination of sign types for their building.

All **window signs** must meet the following criteria:

- Signs shall consist of vinyl applique, paint, or gold leaf.
- Paper signs, banners, or graphic films that adhere to the exterior of the window glazing are not permitted.
- Signs shall be limited to the windows of the first floor.
- Signs may not cover more than thirty percent (30%) of the window area

## SIGN CONTENT AND LEGIBILITY

A sign should be artistic, interesting, and compatible with the building. It must be simple and easily read. This is to the proprietor's advantage, because quick recognition will enable prospective customer to easily recognize a business.

Signs may contain the following information

- 1) The name of the business
- 2) An abbreviated by-line, limited to no more than three (3) words
- 3) A symbol, art object, or logo
- 4) A directional symbol if necessary

The contrast between the logo or lettering and background color can greatly increase the overall legibility of the sign. Simple signs are often the best to communicate a message.

Generally, the expectation would be that one larger sign (not to exceed 12 square feet) would be the sign placed parallel with the building, and one smaller sign, (not to exceed 8 square feet) would be placed to inform the pedestrian. Combination might include the following:

Wall (12) + Hanging (8) = 20 square feet  
Awning (12) + Hanging (8) = 20 square feet  
Awning (12) + Window (8) = 20 square feet  
Wall (12) + Ground (8) = 20 square feet

However, it should be noted that while each business tenant has a maximum limit of 20 square feet of sign area, the tenant is not entitled to that entire 20 square feet. In some cases tenant spaces are too small or too visually busy to utilize all of the square footage.

# PROHIBITED SIGNS



Hanging and other suspended signs may not have multiple components or addenda to the principle sign.



All exterior signs should be simple in nature and may not provide a product list or a series of services.



The display of products, goods or services outside of the store shall be considered part of a sign and is prohibited. All sales and the display of items for sale must take place within a building or approved structure.



Commercial banners are prohibited in the Lahaina Historic District.



# PROHIBITED SIGNS



Although beautifully executed, murals of this nature are not allowed in the Lahaina Historic District.



This menu board sign, while beautifully built and displayed, is excessively sized.



Digital and/or LED lighted or internally illuminated signs are not permitted.



This menu board sign is both excessively sized and poorly designed.



Any portable sign is prohibited, regardless of whether or not it is on public or private property.



THIS



NOT THIS





THIS



NOT THIS



# THE SIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Before beginning a sign construction or installation, please be aware that construction of a new sign or alteration of an existing sign requires approval by the County of Maui through the Planning Department. All signs shall conform to the provisions of this document.

The Planning Department may refer any sign to the Maui County Cultural Resources Commission for review and approval. All deviations from the letter of the Design Guidelines will be taken to the Cultural Resources Commission for review and approval.

Variances - Wall and hanging signs exceeding the allowable sign area pursuant to Section 19.52.030 Signs, Maui County Code, as amended, shall require both Cultural Resources Commission and Maui County Council approval.

# APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

An application for Lahaina Historic District sign approval shall contain the following information:

- Location and ownership/authorization information for the property and business;
- A drawing/graphic showing the sign area, dimensions, shape, colors, graphics, and lettering style of the proposed sign, along with a description of materials to be used. Color samples shall be submitted.
- A drawing, sketch or photograph of the building showing the proposed placement of the signs and other signs on the building or property;
- An elevation or section drawing or sketch to show placement, mounting or suspension, and height above grade for the projected signs, including a schematic of this view, with the dimensions and other details.
- A plot plan for a proposed ground sign, showing the setback from the street/property line; and
- A detailed drawing and description of any direct lighting proposed for the sign, including the lumen and details of the light fixtures or any appropriate shielding or screening.

# SIGN APPROVAL TAGS

Once approved, all historic district signs are issued a tag to indicate the sign has been reviewed and approved as appropriate for the historic district. The tags are numbered and correspond to the specific design that was approved when the sign was reviewed. The County of Maui shall administer a comprehensive enforcement program.

Any sign installed after the adoption of these guidelines without first obtaining a Historic District Sign Approval shall be considered an illegal sign. Any non-conforming sign shall be removed.



*Example of a Historic District Sign approval tag on the Honolulu Cookie Company Sign on Front Street. Tags should be placed so that County inspector can easily observe the sign's compliance.*



# EMBRACING LAHAINA'S PLANTATION HISTORY

The Cultural Resources Commission appreciates and respects that many businesses go through extensive branding efforts to build a recognizable image. That being said, even internationally recognizable chains modify their brand to meet the design guidelines of the district in which they desire to locate. Lahaina's Historic Districts are highly desirable for tenants from the local mom & pop to formula based-based retailers from around the world. Retaining the plantation era architecture and aesthetic will improve the brand of the district and further enhance Lahaina Town as a unique place to shop, dine, recreate and enjoy the beautiful ambiance that makes Front Street an award winning Great Street.



Mayor Alan Arakawa, Theo Morrison, Executive Director for the Lahaina Restoration Foundation (LRF); David Allaire, President of LRF; and Paul Luersen, AICP, President of the American Planning Association Hawaii Chapter accepting the Great Street Award for Front Street in December of 2011.

## HISTORIC DISTRICT RULES OF THUMB

### The Cultural Resources Commission Recommends:

- Sign size should be compatible to the scale of the building, adjacent buildings and streetscape;
- Maintaining and repairing historic signage with materials to match the original whenever possible;
- Innovative signage that identifies the business, complements the style of the building and is appropriately scaled for its location;
- Using materials that are consistent with the character of the building;
- Using existing ambient light or storefront lighting in lieu of sign lighting whenever possible;
- Using light styles for signage that are consistent with the character of the historic building including location, orientation and brightness;
- A well designed smaller sign can have more of an impact than a larger sign, particularly in the Historic District where most people are viewing the sign at close range and moving slowly;
- Signs should not be installed in locations that damage or obstruct important architectural features;
- Signage for 1st floor businesses should be located below the 2nd floor window sills.

### The Cultural Resources Commission Discourages:

- The use of fasteners that destroy important building fabric for the installation of signs;
- Signage that obstructs views into the store through storefront windows and glazing;
- Signage that covers up important architectural details, windows, or doors;
- Signs on building roofs;
- Business signs affixed above the building awning;
- Signs mounted to or painted on the parapet of multi-tenant buildings;
- Complex graphics, logos or images that could not or would not have been used during the plantation era of the historic district;
- Multi-colored sign backgrounds or airbrushed appearance of any portion of the sign.

### Case by Case

The Cultural Resources Commission understands that following the rules of thumb may not work for every building with the Historic District. The Cultural Resources Commission invites applicants who are unable to meet the letter of these design guidelines to request a review by the Cultural Resources Commission, who may allow deviations from the design guidelines.

# HISTORIC DISTRICT BANNER REGULATIONS

- 1) Banners are permitted at the following locations for community events occurring at such locations:
  - a) Across Front Street between the Wharf Cinema Center and Banyan Tree Park (for events occurring on Front Street).
  - b) Across Front Street between Kimo's and the former Moose McGillicuddy's (for events occurring on Front Street).
  - c) Kamehameha Iki Park (subject to Parks Department approval)
- 2) Banner requests shall be by or on behalf of a non-profit organization to promote community events occurring within the Lahaina Historic Districts.
- 3) Banners must be limited to a maximum area of twenty-four (24) square feet and double-sided.
- 4) The name of the non-profit beneficiary must be featured prominently on the banner. Wording as it will appear on the banner must be submitted to the County with the banner request.
- 5) No liquor logos shall be used on Historic District banners.
- 6) Each banner may be hung for a period of seven (7) days only.
- 7) Banners must be securely fastened. The sponsoring organization will be responsible for making sure that the banner is secured properly at all times. It must be neat in appearance and pulled taut so its message is clear and visible.

**THIS**



**NOT THIS**

